

# BOSTON INFORMER

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The newsletter for people who care about Boston

January-February 2001

## Tremont Tower



Source: Jung/Brannen Associates

Filling the gap on Tremont Street at the Boston Common between Tremont-on-the-Common and Parkside is a new 18-story, 62-unit condominium building called Tremont Tower. Planned in the 1980s as the mirror-image of Parkside, the recession put it on hold. The new 100,000-s.f. building is owned by W. T. Matt Corporation. Architect: Jung/Brannen Associates. Completion expected in July 2001.

## Loews Boston Hotel-Theater District



Source: Sawyer Enterprises

Sawyer Enterprises and Loews Hotel have proposed a 290-foot, 300-room luxury hotel with a ground-floor restaurant at the corner of Tremont and Stuart streets (now a parking lot). Included in the 350,850 s.f. project (FAR 13.4) will be a fitness center, meeting/function rooms, 30,580 s.f. for Emerson College's Performance Development Center and 121 underground parking spaces. Design architect: William Rawn Associates; architect of record, Jung/Brannen Associates. Estimated completion: 2003.

## 33 Arch Street

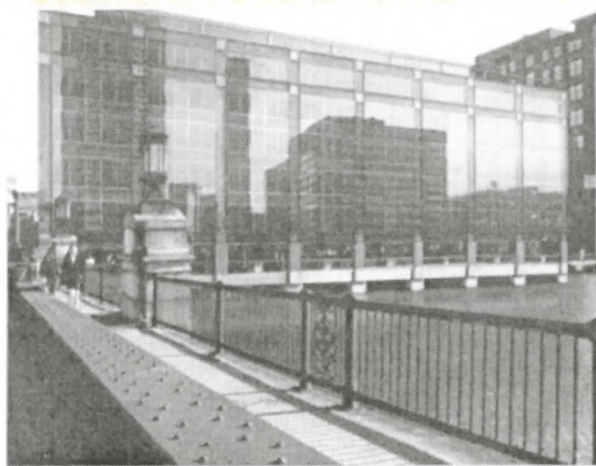


Source: Rendering by Neoscape. Architect: Elkus/Manfredi

After a 10-year delay, Downtown Crossing's new tower is moving forward. A 31-story, 600,000-s.f. office tower called 33 Arch Street will incorporate the former Woolworth garage, providing direct access to over 800 parking spaces. The project is a joint investment led by Congress Group Ventures which recently bought the site for \$40 million. Architect: Elkus/Manfredi Architects Ltd. Completion due fall 2003.

## 303 Congress Street

### LIBRARY BOSTON ARCHITECTURAL CENTER



Source: Finegold Alexander + Associates

A new six-story, 70,000 s.f. commercial building is rising where a previous six-story building stood until being demolished six years ago. The previous building was sinking into the Fort Point Channel due to seawater corrosion of flawed concrete pilings (see The Boston Informer, no. 22, Nov./Dec. 1995). The new 303 Congress Street will feature a street-level restaurant and is estimated to cost \$11 million. Architect: Finegold Alexander + Associates Inc. Completion expected in 2001.



## People Movers

**Andrew Natsios**, from MassPike chairman and Central Artery/Tunnel (CA/T) project chief to U. S. AID.

**Richard Capka**, the former brigadier general of the Army Corps of Engineers, has become MassPike CEO and CA/T project chief.

**Michael Lewis** has been promoted from acting director to director of the CA/T project.

**Robert Ruzzo**, from chief development officer at MassPike to general counsel of Mass. Housing Finance Agency.

**Stephen Hines**, from Division of Capital Asset Management to chief development officer at MassPike.

**Norman Mineta** is the new U. S. Secretary of Transportation.

**Christine Todd Whitman** is the new head of the Environmental Protection Agency.

**Don Evans** is the new U. S. Secretary of Commerce.

**Jim Brennan**, from deputy director of commuter rail for the MBTA to VHB.

**Steve Silveira**, from deputy director of MBTA real estate management to ML Strategies.

**Robert Dunfey** leaves as regional director of the General Services Administration (GSA) for New England.

**Glenn Rotondo**, former GSA associate regional administrator for operations is acting regional director.

**Rebecca Barnes**, from Barnes Resources Group, urban design consultants, to chief planner for the Boston Redevelopment Authority, a new position.

**Anne McKinnon**, ICON architecture, has returned to Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates.

**Bill Schwartz**, from Cambridge Systematics to Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates.

**1 Midway Development**—A proposed 25-story office tower and mixed-use residential and commercial spaces between A Street and the Bypass Road in South Boston are being proposed by Beacon Capital Partners. The \$300 million development includes rehabilitation of four warehouse buildings and some 80,000 s.f. of artist space. Zoning allows for 80-foot-high buildings while a master plan in process advocates 150 feet; the proposal is about 300 feet high. Construction could begin this year and be completed by 2004. The name "Midway" is taken from the private street name in South Boston, not an island in the Pacific Ocean or carnival space.

**2 Charles/MGH MBTA station**—The MBTA has advanced its plans for a new ADA-accessible Red Line station at Charles/MGH. The new station will be located slightly closer to Cambridge Street and will no longer be accessed from pedestrian bridges. Instead, access to the new station will be from street-level pedestrian crossings that will lead to escalators, stairs and an elevator to the mezzanine level. The MBTA expects to complete 30 percent design in early spring and will hold another in a series of public meetings sometime in April. Design of the station is expected to be complete by the end of 2001/early 2002 with construction beginning in spring of 2002. The consultant team is led by the joint venture of HDR-Elkus/Manfredi.

**3 Children's Museum Planning for Expansion**—The Children's Museum has hired consultants Brunner-Cott and Associates, Inc. of Cambridge to help prepare an expansion master plan for the next five years. In the meantime, the Children's Museum has bought the upper-floor space vacated by the Computer Museum and has sold the floating restaurant vessel moored opposite the Museum. The old boardwalk is being replaced by a new section of Harborwalk, publicly accessible waterfront walkway.

**4 Central Artery Surface Restoration, Ramp Parcels 6 and 12**—To get an idea of the development feasibility on Central Artery ramp parcels 6 and 12 in the North End, the Central Artery/Tunnel project (CA/T) issued Requests for Information (RFI) to developers last year. The CA/T project is committed to covering Parcel 6 (40,00 s.f.) and Parcel 12 (67,000 s.f.) if developers cannot be found. Developer responses were varied and creative:

**Parcels 6 and 12 together:**

Cathartes Investments—Parcel 6: 200-room hotel, community space. Parcel 12: 175 residential units.

Modern Continental—Parcel 6: Community/recreation center. Parcel 12: Residential, hotel, restaurant, health club, retail or office.

Nicholas Deane—Parcel 6: 84 residential units, health club, 80 parking spaces, office or movie theater. Parcel 12: 48 residential units, office, restaurant, parking.

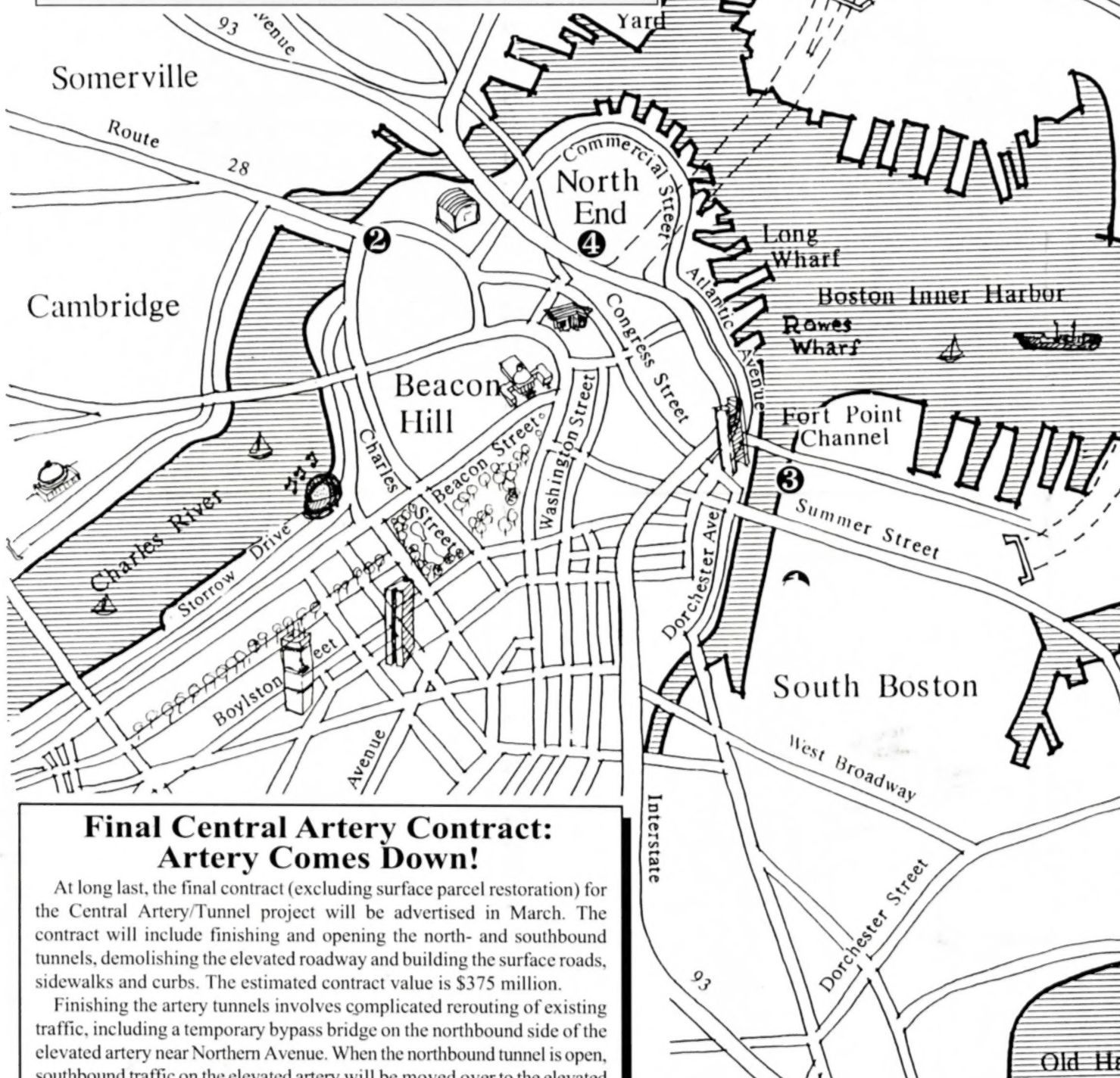
**Parcel 6 only:**

Northland Development—Supermarket, office, 100 parking spaces, community space.

**Parcel 12 only:**

Fish Associates, Sullivan Properties, Boston Museum project—200 residential units and museum or museum only.

Encouraged by these responses the CA/T project is going out with Requests for Proposals this summer and will have about two years to firm up final plans for the parcels.



## Final Central Artery Contract: Artery Comes Down!

At long last, the final contract (excluding surface parcel restoration) for the Central Artery/Tunnel project will be advertised in March. The contract will include finishing and opening the north- and southbound tunnels, demolishing the elevated roadway and building the surface roads, sidewalks and curbs. The estimated contract value is \$375 million.

Finishing the artery tunnels involves complicated rerouting of existing traffic, including a temporary bypass bridge on the northbound side of the elevated artery near Northern Avenue. When the northbound tunnel is open, southbound traffic on the elevated artery will be moved over to the elevated northbound side after the median is removed. Parts of the elevated southbound side will then be torn down.



As the elevated structure is demolished, the temporary concrete surface decking now in place and its support beams will be removed and the tunnel slurry walls and soldier pilings will be cut down to four feet below the surface to allow for the surface restoration. The final streetscape will be built as the work zones become available. Work on several ramps will be finished.

The concrete deck on the elevated roadway will be demolished in daytime only, but some steel demolition will be done at night. The steel is covered with lead paint (and some asbestos) requiring deleading before being cut. The deleading method will be chosen by the contractor as will the method of cutting. The bulk of the steel will be encapsulated to contain the lead paint, then shipped to places unknown.

The contract will be awarded in July 2001 with work starting in November 2001. Most of the northbound tunnel will open one year later and the majority of the southbound tunnel will open in November 2003. The entire project will be substantially complete by December 2004. Although not part of this contract, the existing double-deck bridge over the Charles River will also be demolished by December 2004.

## Changing Prudential Center Plans

A recent review of the Prudential Center plan reveals a possible addition of housing to replace the square footage which might be lost to a proposed hotel along Boylston Street. Plans call for a new office building between the Hynes Convention Center and the existing Star Market as well as the relocation of the supermarket to the corner of Huntington Avenue and Exeter Street. Boston Properties, owners of much of the Prudential Center complex, is looking at alternatives which include adding two additional stories to the proposed Boylston Street housing/hotel block, increasing it from 11 stories to 13, as well as the potential of adding a 12-16 story residential building along Exeter Street between the Lord & Taylor store and the Gloucester Tower.

The new supermarket on Exeter Street is scheduled to open in 2002, after which construction of the office building can begin.



Prudential Center's Belvedere residences will be completed in fall 2001.



## Welcome to The Boston Informer

The goal is simple: provide concise public information on construction projects, planning initiatives, and whatever else affects living and working in Boston. Welcome to *The Boston Informer*!

**The Boston Informer** is published by ATC Information, Inc., six times yearly in Boston, Massachusetts. President: Anthony Casendino; vice-presidents, Anne McKinnon, Chris Fincham.

**The Boston Informer** is available by mail only. \$20.00 per year (cheap!). Questions? Telephone (617) 723-7030, fax (617) 437-1886 or e-mail: 103477.556@compuserve.com



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Following the MBTA's lead to sell station names, the City of Boston is selling naming rights for streets.

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## We are asking...

We don't get it. There's a valuable prize waiting for the person who can answer this question.

**Background:** A surface parking lot can generate gross revenue of \$35-\$40 per s.f. per year with minimal maintenance and staffing [150 s.f. per space, 150 s.f. per space for aisles, \$30 per day per space parking fees, 360 days per year].

Construction costs for an office building on the same site would be approximately \$500 per s.f. Assuming office rents of \$50 per s.f. per year, gross revenue would be about \$35 per s.f. per year less major costs for amortization, utilities, maintenance, staff, etc. [about one-third of a building is corridors, lobbies, elevators]. There is also a risk factor with vacancies.

**Question:** Why would anyone want to take the risk to build an office building on a successful parking lot?

The best answer will win a \$50 gift certificate for parking at a downtown lot or bookstore of *The Boston Informer's* choice.

Editor's choice is final. All entries property of *The Boston Informer*. No spreadsheets, please. Fax entries to 437-1886 or e-mail to 103477.556@compuserve.com



## You can't buy a cup of coffee for 50¢ anymore...

In 1992 when *The Boston Informer* debuted,

- The Boston Globe was 35¢
- A movie ticket was \$6.50
- A half gallon of ice cream cost \$1.49
- A pay telephone call was 10¢
- Two-bedroom waterfront apartments rented for \$850/mo.
- You could shop at Lechmere and Woolworth
- A subscription to *The Boston Informer* was \$20

Unfortunately, these are all history. After nine years, *The Boston Informer* is increasing to \$25 per year with our 50th smash issue on April 1, 2001. No new corporate offices or high-priced executives or reporters—just covering nine years of rising costs. Thank you for sticking with us!



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